

REMARKS

Claims 21-40 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 21, 22, 32, 35, and 40 have been amended, and claim 37 has been cancelled. None of the amendments add new matter.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action indicated that claims 26, 27, 29-31, 38 and 39 are allowable over the prior art.

II. Drawings

The Office Action objected to the drawings as not showing coplanar sealing surfaces and anti-rotation surfaces (claims 21, 32, 35, and 40) and coplanar sealing beads and frictional surfaces (claim 37). Without conceding that these features are not shown in the drawings, Applicants assert that the claims as amended are fully supported by the drawings. Claims 21, 32, 35, and 40, as amended, recite gaskets having sealing surfaces and anti-rotation surfaces that are coplanar prior to coupling make-up. Such a gasket (reference number 16) is shown prior to make-up in Figures 3-5, and after make-up in Figure 1. Claim 37 has been cancelled.

III. Election/Restrictions

The Office Action indicated that newly added claims 41-43 are directed to a distinct invention and were therefore withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. Applicants reserve the right to pursue these claims in a divisional or continuation application.

IV. Claim Objection

Claim 32 has been amended to correct the noted informality.

V. Rejections Under §112

The Office Action rejected claims 21, 32, 35, and 37 as being indefinite with respect to the claimed feature that the sealing surface and anti-rotation surface are coplanar upon assembly, as was recited in claims 21, 32, and 35 (also recited in claim 40), or that the frictional surface is coplanar with the sealing bead, as was recited in claim 37. Without conceding that these surfaces cannot be coplanar upon assembly, Applicants assert that the claims as amended properly point out and distinctly claim subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

As indicated above, claims 21, 32, 35, and 40, as amended, recite gaskets having sealing surfaces and anti-rotation surfaces that are coplanar prior to coupling make-up, as shown in drawings of uncompressed gasket 16 in Figures 3-5. Claim 37 has been cancelled.

VI. Rejections Under §102 - Babuder

The Office Action rejected claim 21-24, 32-34, 36, 37, and 40 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,145,219 to Babuder.

As amended, claim 21 recites features not disclosed or suggested by Babuder. For example, claim 21 recites a sealing gasket including sealing surfaces that contact sealing beads of tubular members and anti-rotation surfaces that contact frictional surfaces of the tubular members, with the respective sealing surfaces and anti-rotation surfaces being coplanar prior to coupling make-up. Babuder does not disclose or suggest a gasket having sealing surfaces and anti-rotation surfaces that are coplanar prior to coupling make-up, as the sealing protrusion engages the gasket 125 (Fig. 9) and the frictional surface/knurls 150 engage the anti-torque

member 140 on surfaces that are not coplanar (i.e., the surfaces do not occupy the same plane) with each other prior to make up. As such, claim 21 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 22-24 and 36 depend from claim 21 and are also in condition for allowance.

As amended, claim 32 recites features not disclosed or suggested by Babuder. For example, claim 32 recites a gland having a raised annular sealing bead and a frictional surface comprising a radially extending band located radially outward of said raised annular sealing bead, with the sealing bead and the frictional surface being adapted to engage coplanar surfaces of a sealing gasket. Babuder does not disclose or suggest a gland having a sealing bead and frictional surface that are positioned to engage coplanar surfaces of a sealing gasket, as the frictional surface/knurls 150 engage an annular anti-torque member 140 and the sealing protrusion extends well beyond the frictional surface/knurls 150 to engage the gasket 125, which is recessed within the member 140 (and therefore not coplanar with the end face of the member). As such, claim 32 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 33 and 34 depend from claim 32 and are also in condition for allowance.

As amended, claim 40 recites features not disclosed or suggested by Babuder. For example, claim 40 recites a sealing gasket including sealing surfaces that contact sealing beads of tubular members and anti-rotation surfaces that contact frictional surfaces of the tubular members, with the respective sealing surfaces and anti-rotation surfaces being coplanar prior to coupling make-up. As such, claim 40 is in condition for allowance.

VII. Rejection Under §102 - Benjamin

The Office Action rejected claim 35 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,254,973 to Benjamin.

As amended, claim 35 recites features not disclosed or suggested by Benjamin. For example, claim 35 recites first and second tubular members each including a frictional surface

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radially outward from a sealing bead. The Office Action indicates that a frictional surface 40 is disclosed by Benjamin; however, this frictional surface is only provided on one of the two tubular members (female section F) in a socket that is not present on the other of the two tubular members (male section M). Benjamin does not disclose or suggest having frictional surfaces on both tubular members. As such, claim 35 is in condition for allowance.

VIII. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing remarks and amendments, Applicant believes that all of the claims in this case are now in condition for allowance and an indication to that effect is respectfully requested. Furthermore, if the Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of this case, the Examiner should feel free to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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